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Title: Need to extend loan waiver scheme to the cardamom growers having land holdings upto five hectares.

SHRI K. FRANCIS GEORGE (IDUKKI): The Loan/Debt Waiver Scheme announced by the Government through Budget 2008-09 has not given any relief to the Cardamom Farmers of the country, as the extent of holding of most of the farmers are above 2 hectares. Upto 5 hectares of land has to be considered as small and medium plantations in the cardamom sector and all agricultural loans including loans availed for purchase of land for cardamom cultivation should be fully waived. All the cardamom farmers are in debt as the input costs are very high due to high cost of labour, fertilizers, chemicals and other inputs. Further there is steep fall in price for cardamom for the last several years.

Funds set apart for social forestry and environmental protection has to be channeled through cardamom farmers as they protect trees to grow cardamom. They should also be given insurance cover, as the crop is highly sensitive to climate changes. Also import of cardamom and its value-added products should be banned or discouraged and a price stabilization fund may be formed to help the farmers get a fair price and also to ensure the existence of the crop in future.

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